



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re the Patent Application of :

CHRISTOPHER J. LASHER ET AL. :

Serial No. 08/455,402 :

Group Art Unit: 3201

Filed: May 31, 1995 :

Examiner:

For: ENHANCED DRUG DISPENSING  
SYSTEM :

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Honorable Commissioner of  
Patents and Trademarks  
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

In accordance with the rules and guidelines of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, the applicants hereby makes of record the references listed in the attached PTO Form 1449. The undersigned has enclosed copies of all of the listed references.

Applicant is aware of a prior art pill dispensing system employing a bank of dispensers, each having a dispensing mechanism similar to that disclosed in the Hurst Patent No. 4,869,394. A dispenser in the bank is selected and activated to count out a selected number of pills in a prescription in response to the wand of a bar code on a prescription label. The prescription is counted out into an output tube where they are accumulated behind a sliding door. The technician after wand the bar code applies

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the prescription label to the bottle and lifts the door to empty the counted out pills into the pill bottle.

The applicant is also aware of a prior art system wherein banks of pill dispensers employing a dispensing mechanism like that disclosed in the Hurst patent above mentioned are under the control of a computer to count out pills to an output tube where the pills are accumulated behind a sliding door. A robotic mechanism on wheels rolls back and forth among the bank of dispensers. The robotic mechanism has a carousel carrying a plurality of pill bottles. By combined motion of the rotation of the carousel and movement of the carriage, a selected pill bottle can be brought under an output tube whereupon the mechanism lifts the door to dispense the pills in the selected pill bottle. The pill dispensers in this system can be filled from the back of the bank of dispensers permitting the selected dispenser to dispense pills while it is being filled.

The applicant is also aware of a refill lockout system employing a bank of dispensers, each employing a dispensing mechanism like that described in the above-mentioned Hurst patent. This system is also described in a publication which is listed in the attached prior art citation form. In this system, a computer permits only one of the dispensing cells to be filled at a time and a locking system prevents all of the dispensers except for the selected dispenser to be filled. The computer selects the dispenser to be filled by wandng a bar code label on the bulk package of the drug to be used to refill the dispenser. In order

to fill a dispenser, the dispenser had to be opened up from the front side on which the output tube from the dispenser is located. When the dispensing cell is opened from the front for refilling, the dispenser is incapable of dispensing the pills.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: May 14, 1996

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231, on the date of signature identified below.

Richard L. Aitken, Registration No. 18,791  
Signature: Richard L. Aitken  
Date of Signature: May 14, 1996